89-04785/

Partners For Health

"A New Direction for the Promotion of Health in Manitoba"

A Manitoba **"Partners For Health"** Policy Paper
May 1989

Manitoba
Health

Introduction

Manitoba's "Partners For Health" health promotion initiative aims to strengthen our ability to prevent illness and injury, and to promote the greatest possible health for every person in Manitoba.

For more than 10 years — in Manitoba and internationally — there has been a growing recognition that effective health services must do more than respond to illness: they must also focus on prevention and health promotion.

Each year, Manitobans spend more than $1.5 billion on health care. That amounts to more than $1,500 for each man, woman and child in the province. We can't afford continually escalating health care costs. Health promotion and preventative strategies — emphasizing the responsibility we each have for our own health — are critical at this time.

Successive governments in this province have begun to move in the direction of promoting health. Manitoba Health operates a number of programs with just such a focus: health education, immunization, rehabilitation, reproductive and prenatal education. Other parts of the Government operate programs that can make significant contributions to good health in the province. These include:

- Workplace health and safety committees
- Driver education programs
- Environmental standards and inspections
- Alcohol and substance abuse programs
- The "Alive" and "Aware" programs.

Organizations throughout the community also contribute to the overall Manitoba effort to improve health. Organizations like the Manitoba Heart Foundation, Canadian Cancer Society, Canadian Diabetes Association, Manitoba Lung Association, Canadian Mental Health Association — together with community clubs, recreation associations, schools, seniors' organizations, employers and unions, church groups and others provide programs and activities that contribute to improved health in Manitoba.

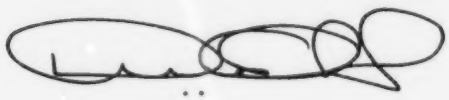
Manitoba's new "Partners For Health" initiative has two main goals. ***The first is to encourage every Manitoban to take personal responsibility for his or her own health.*** Manitoba Health will work with the province's health professions, government, business, industry and community groups to provide the information and the supports people need to lead lives that are as healthy and full as possible.

The message should be clear and it should be blunt: each of us must recognize the costs — in human terms and in health care dollar terms — of preventable, lifestyle based illnesses that arise from such habits as drug abuse, alcohol abuse, smoking and poor nutrition. We must take personal responsibility to make the lifestyle changes that can stop the waste of human health and of health care dollars.

The second goal of the Partners For Health initiative is to involve the entire community in a more active and focused effort to identify and correct risks to health — in the environment, at work, in legislation and in lifestyles.

If we achieve these goals, the result will be improved health for the people of Manitoba.

This paper describes the reasons for the "Partners For Health" initiative, and some of the first steps we will be taking to begin to achieve our goals. I hope you will read it carefully. If you have comments or suggestions I hope you will write to me. And I hope that you will support these efforts in your own profession and your own community — as a Manitoba Partner For Health.



Donald W. Orchard
Minister of Health For Manitoba

The Concept of Health Promotion: a new way of looking at health

Over the past decades, there has been growing concern throughout the Western world that the traditional focus of health services, with its heavy emphasis on the treatment of illness or injury, is too narrow and ignores too many factors that have direct bearing on the health of the population.

These concerns have led to the evolution of "health promotion" as a key part of society's overall health strategy.

In its early forms, health promotion focused on health education — on providing people with the information they need to be able to gauge the health impacts of decisions. This has involved a range of media advertising programs urging people to exercise, to avoid drug or alcohol abuse and to give up smoking. By dramatizing the health impacts of personal lifestyle decisions, these efforts have contributed to increased public awareness of health risks and improvements in lifestyles viewed from a health perspective.

More recently, the concept of health promotion has been broadened to include more systematic efforts to address a wide range of factors that affect health: from environmental and workplace hazards to product safety, transportation, and social factors.

Increasingly the health service system has worked to develop community based approaches in which people work together to achieve individual and community health goals — identifying and responding to risks earlier, providing a full continuum of services from prevention to primary care to acute or chronic care to rehabilitation services. These developments act as a complement to the traditional "illness centred" services that have been provided through hospitals and other institutions.

Health practitioners, too, have increased their focus on prevention. Support groups have been established for a wide range of individuals who are exposed to particular health risks — often with the leadership of health professionals.

Several consistent themes run throughout the growing emphasis on health promotion.

Within the health promotion view, each individual is seen as having a responsibility to promote his or her own health. Health is no longer defined as "the absence of illness"; instead it is seen as having the ability to lead the fullest and most productive life possible.

To that end, health promotion focuses on the creation of the conditions necessary for individuals to achieve health — by providing information, skills and support that people need to take control of their own health and by striving for the safest possible environment.

All of these trends exist within the communities and the health services system of the Province of Manitoba. But death and illness statistics for the province's population make it clear that there is still a great deal to be done to achieve our goals of improved health and a healthier total environment for everyone in the province.

Manitoba's new "Partners For Health" initiative aims to provide a focus for a renewed commitment to improved health through a partnership that will involve government, health professionals, non-government organizations, community groups, business, industry and individuals and families across the province.

Manitoba's Health Promotion Challenge: the numbers tell the story.

In statistical terms, the health of Manitobans compares well with that of other Canadians and North Americans. This is evidence of the quality of the health services that have been developed in the province and to the success that health promotion efforts are already achieving.

Table 1 shows the major causes of death among Manitobans.

Most of the leading causes of death in Manitoba — heart disease, cancer, chronic respiratory disease, motor vehicle or other accidents are preventable and/or controllable.

Heart disease — much of which could be avoided or ameliorated — remains the major cause of premature death and hospitalization in Manitoba.

As Table 2 shows, if we assume a life expectancy of 70 years for Manitobans, premature deaths from these leading causes can be said to have a staggering annual "cost" in terms of years of life lost.

Medical research has identified major ***risk factors*** among the adult population of Manitoba — factors that contribute to men and women becoming more vulnerable to injury or disease. They include smoking, high blood pressure, high serum cholesterol, unhealthy weight, lack of physical exercise and excessive alcohol consumption.

Table 3 shows the prevalence of these major risk factors among Manitobans.

Health in Manitoba is jeopardized by more than these lifestyle related risk factors. It has become clear that socio-economic factors, such as unemployment and inadequate housing, and environmental and workplace hazards affect health.

The degree of access to a full continuum of health services, including preventive and rehabilitative services as well as acute or chronic treatment, can be significant factors in determining overall levels of health in the community.

The incidence of disease and injury can be reduced but, of course, disease and injury can not be totally eradicated, so Manitoba also faces the challenge of working to enhance the ability of people to cope with illness, diseases and resulting disabilities in a way that contributes to their enjoyment of the highest possible quality of life.

In short, Manitoba faces a multidimensional health promotion challenge that calls for a mixture of public policies that make living and working environments safer and more manageable and that provide a full continuum of health services and supports.

It calls for the active involvement of the entire community — those who plan for, give and receive health care. And it calls for individuals, organizations and communities across Manitoba to accept responsibility for promoting individual health plus safe and healthy environments.

TABLE 1
LEADING CAUSES OF DEATH IN MANITOBA, 1986

Causes of Deaths	No. of Deaths	% of All Deaths
Ischemic Heart Disease	2,144	24.3
Cerebrovascular Disease	725	8.2
Lung Cancer	540	6.1
Pneumonia and Influenza	379	4.3
Chronic Obstructive Lung	314	3.6
Colon Rectal Cancer	240	2.7
Diabetes Mellitus	179	2.0
Motor Vehicle Accidents	161	1.9
Other Causes	3,130	44.3
TOTAL	8,816	100.0

Source: *Manitoba Vital Statistics, 1986*

TABLE 2
POTENTIAL YEARS OF LIFE LOST TO AGE 70 BY MAJOR CAUSES IN MANITOBA

Cause	Potential Years of Life Lost (PYLL)	% of Total (PYLL)
Ischemic Heart Disease	5,751	10.2
Motor Vehicle Accidents	5,360	9.5
Suicide	4,110	7.3
Congenital Anomalies	3,938	7.0
Perinatal Causes	3,319	5.9
Lung Cancer	2,858	5.0
Stroke	1,463	2.6
Liver Cirrhosis	956	1.7
Pneumonia and Influenza	900	1.6
Diabetes Mellitus	730	1.3
Chronic Obstructive Lung Disease	393	0.7
Other	24,980	44.4

Source: *Manitoba Vital Statistics, 1986*

TABLE 3

PREVALENCE OF MAJOR RISK FACTORS IN THE ADULT POPULATION

Risk Factors	Prevalence	
Smoking	28%	2
High Blood Pressure (Diastolic BP> 90)	21%	3
High Serum Cholesterol Above 260 mg/dl	9%	3
Above 200 mg/dl	30%	3
Lack of Physical Activity (Exercising less than 3 X per week)	49%	1
Excessive Alcohol Intake	5%	4

Sources:

1. *Health and Welfare Canada (1987).* ***The Active Health Report — Perspective on Canada's Health Promotion Survey****, 1985 Ottawa.*
2. *Health and Welfare Canada (1988).* ***Smoking Behavior of Canadians — 1986****. Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services.*
3. *Nova Scotia Department of Health (1987).* ***Nova Scotia Heart Health Survey****, Halifax.*
4. *Ableson, J., Paddon P., & Strohmenger C.* ***(1982) Perspectives on Health****, Statistics Canada, Ottawa.*

TABLE 4

SUMMARY OF INTERRELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN MODIFIABLE RISK FACTORS AND LEADING CAUSES OF MORTALITY/MORBIDITY

Risk Factors	Preventable Cancer	Cardio-vascular Disease	Diabetes	Injuries	Preventable Lung Disease
Smoking	✓✓	✓✓		✓	✓✓
High Blood Pressure		✓✓			
High Serum Cholesterol		✓✓			
Unhealthy Weight	✓	✓✓	✓✓		
Lack of Physical Activity		✓	✓	✓	
Excessive Alcohol Intake	✓	✓	✓	✓✓	
Unhealthy Diet	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓		
Environmental Factors	✓			✓✓	✓✓

Legend

✓✓ Strong association
✓ Evidence of association

Other Contributing Factors

Age
Gender
Socio-economic factors

The Foundations of the Partners For Health Initiative

Manitoba's Partners For Health initiative will grow and evolve over the next decade as more groups and individuals join the partnership to achieve our shared goals. The initiative begins with an action plan — measures that can stimulate an effective partnership involving all Manitobans.

Strengthening the Health Promotion and Prevention Focus of Health Services In Manitoba

The provision of a full continuum of health services can contribute to improved health throughout the province. In many cases, early and effective delivery of preventive services can reduce disease and the requirement for hospitalization. Providing such services requires that the various parts of the health services system work more effectively together.

Manitoba's New Partnership For Mental Health is one clear example of this kind of integrated approach to health services, effectively linking community resources, community mental health workers and other mental health professionals, preventive, clinical, institutional, rehabilitative and community support programs. The Partners For Health initiative aims for this same integrated approach throughout health services in Manitoba. But the partnership will extend beyond existing health service programs.

1. The Manitoba Health Advisory Network

Manitoba's Health Advisory Network has been asked to create a Project Team For Health Promotion. It will include leading representatives from all parts of the health services system and part of its mandate will be to identify areas where better integration of health services can contribute to improved health outcomes throughout the entire health services system of Manitoba.

In particular, the Advisory Network Health Promotion Project Team will be asked to provide advice to the Department as we work to develop more effective strategies to provide services to identified high risk populations.

In some cases, these activities will identify areas where better coordination of services provided by different government departments can contribute to improved health outcomes. Groups with special needs or who face language and cultural differences that can reduce their access to health can benefit from coordinated interdepartmental government action. ***The Department of Health will act as the Lead Department in developing joint inter-departmental plans to achieve such coordination where it can be beneficial.***

2. A Higher Priority For Health Promotion and Prevention

Manitoba Health will also increase its efforts in promoting health, working cooperatively with community groups, business and industry across the province.

The Health Promotion Directorate's services will be consolidated into two main sections

- Healthy Lifestyles
- Services to Special Target Groups.

In addition to a range of education and communications activities, the Directorate will develop working relationships with community groups throughout the province to help the groups themselves play a more active role in addressing the health problems of their members. There will be special efforts made to form effective partnerships with multicultural organizations, the Aboriginal community, Seniors' organizations and others to help identify and address the health needs of particular at-risk groups of Manitobans.

Manitoba Health will — from time to time — appoint "Health Promotion Ambassadors" to give a special focus to the health promotion message within the partnerships we will form with groups throughout Manitoba.

3. Government Leadership and "Healthy Public Policy"

Another important foundation of the Partners For Health initiative is an 18 month ***"Healthy Public Policy Review"*** of a range of high priority provincial government programs, activities and legislation to identify areas where reforms can contribute to better health and a safer, healthier environment.

The Review will be steered by the Human Services Committee of Cabinet which will be chaired by the Minister of Health.

The Cabinet Committee will oversee the work of a Deputy Minister level subcommittee called the "Healthy Public Policy Steering Committee" chaired by the Deputy Minister of Health.

The priority areas for the Healthy Public Policy Review will be those that offer the greatest opportunity for early and significant contributions to improved health and a safer, more healthy environment. The first four areas to be examined will be:

- ***workplace/occupational health and safety issues***
- ***environmental issues***
- ***women's health issues***
- ***native health issues.***

The review will be coordinated through an Inter-Agency/Inter-Departmental Committee, with participation by community leaders. The work of the Committee will be supported by the Director of Health Promotion. This committee, too, will consult broadly with non-government groups who have special knowledge or interests in the areas under review as well as with health professionals.

The reviews of these priority areas will be completed during 1989/90 and recommended changes in legislation or programs will be released for public discussion and evaluation as soon as possible, with the goal of making appropriate legislative, policy or program changes by September 30, 1990.

Other areas of legislation and government policy including housing, transportation and accident prevention activities will also be reviewed as part of an ongoing process to ensure that all activities of government contribute to the achievement of a healthy environment for Manitobans.

4. Extending the Partnership For Health

There are groups in every community in Manitoba who already contribute to health promotion. They include recreational organizations, school boards, seniors' organizations, organizations formed to provide support for people who suffer from or are at risk because of various diseases or disabilities. Labour, corporations and industry organizations can also make valuable contributions to health promotion in Manitoba.

Manitoba Health will be contacting as many of these organizations as possible during 1989 to identify opportunities for joint and cooperative efforts in health education and the promotion of healthy lifestyles, and for enhanced services to special target groups. In some cases, Lottery Funds will be made available as seed money to permit practical and innovative initiatives that can lead to healthier life styles or otherwise contribute to improved health throughout the community.

5. The "Health Promotion at Work" Initiative

One of our key areas of focus will be the workplace. Health promotion in the workplace contributes to the employer's interests — by reducing compensation claims and absenteeism and improving productivity — and to the employee's interest by contributing to improved health status for every individual. The workplace also provides a set of opportunities to promote healthy lifestyles outside the working environment, especially the importance of fitness, nutrition and smoking reduction to help prevent heart and lung disease.

The ***Health Promotion at Work*** initiative is one example of the way the workplace environment can be used to foster new partnerships to promote health. This initiative will involve grants to support projects that can have a measurable impact on the immediate and long term health status of individuals and can achieve reductions in health care costs. Projects will be selected on the basis of their relative effectiveness and all projects will be evaluated on an ongoing basis. Projects aimed at healthy lifestyles (heart health, nutrition, fitness, smoking reduction, alcohol and other substance abuse and educational projects aimed at enhanced safety) will receive a high priority. Projects should also involve employee participation in the planning and implementation of the project and must be assured of the long term support of the employer.

Conclusion:

We cannot afford the cost — in human or in financial terms — of taking health for granted. Manitoba's Partners For Health initiative represents an important effort to achieve more effective health promotion in Manitoba, building on the commitment and resources that already exist throughout the health services system and the community.

Our aim is to challenge every Manitoban to become an active Partner For Health — individually, as family members, as members of the community.

Partners For Health will include enhanced health education and communications activities to promote healthier lifestyles. Wherever possible, these will be undertaken in cooperation with community and health groups across the province. The Partners For Health initiative will also lead to identify and achieve changes and reforms in health services and in a broad range of other government activities that will contribute to our goal of improved health and a safer, healthier environment for all Manitobans.